

Overview *Lake County Sheriff's Office*

Sheriff Daniel A. Dunlap

2013 WITTS Annual Report



LAKE COUNTY ADULT DETENTION FACILITY



Overview of the Women In Transition Through Support Program Annual Report for 2013 Captain Cynthia Brooks

Mission Statement

Our mission is to assist women in reuniting with a positive and healthy environment that minimizes the circumstances that lead to their repeated incarceration. Our focus is to increase their employment skills, develop positive relationship values and support, elevate their educational level, build self-esteem, control choices through anger management, build strength through drug, and alcohol treatment, as well as developing strong family structures.

Goals

Our goal is to reintegrate women and inspire them to be positive and productive citizens that will decrease the potential for repeated incarceration.

Discussion

Historically girls made up a smaller percentage of the population in the juvenile justice system. Overall there are higher numbers of juveniles committing non-violent crimes, however, girls committing criminal offenses are on the rise. Compared to non-offending juveniles, boys girls in the criminal justice system have more risk factors that contribute to delinquent behavior such as; poverty, a higher risk factor for child and sexual abuse, mental health issues and they are becoming more aggressive. There is research lacking in the criminal justice system to understand why girls commit crimes. Boys are more likely

to be arrested for violent crimes while girls are typically arrested for crimes against property, running away, theft and prostitution. In both cases boys and girls in the criminal justice system are more alike than they are different. Juvenile females in the criminal justice system are now being dealt with on the same level as juvenile boys. As the girls grow into women and continue to commit crimes the crimes that they are committing have become a more serious offense. As girls mature into women and continue to commit crimes they stand a less chance of re-entry success than males due upon release from the criminal justice system.

"Women offenders have needs different from those of men, stemming in part from their disproportionate victimization from sexual or physical abuse and their responsibility for children. They are also more likely to be addicted to drugs and to have mental illnesses." ([*Women Offenders: Programming Needs and Promising Approaches*](#), National Institute of Justice).

Common obstacles to both male and female offenders' success include:

- **Education Barriers-** More than one-third of offenders in prison have not earned a high school diploma or GED and 4 out of 5 have not received any postsecondary education. While most prisons offer educational classes (e.g., Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education), only a portion of inmates receive these services. In fact, between 2000 and 2005, the number of prisons offering these services decreased.
- **Employment Barriers-** Furthermore, the lack of job skills, the deterioration of skills while incarcerated (1/3 of offenders receive vocational training while they are incarcerated), intermittent work histories, and the stigma of being in prison make finding legitimate and well-paying employment in the community difficult.
- **Substance Abuse and Addiction-** Fifty-three percent (53%) of male state prisoners and 60% of female state prisoners meet the DSM-IV drug dependence or abuse criteria. This is four times the rate of addiction experienced by the general population. Yet only about one in every ten offenders participates in substance abuse programming prior to release.
- **Mental Health Concerns-** Mental health problems affect the majority of both male (55%) and female (73%) adults in prison. Women offenders often suffer from depression, anxiety disorders (e.g., PTSD), and eating disorders, while substance abuse and antisocial personality disorders are more prevalent among men.
- **Homelessness-** For offenders who may have been homeless prior to incarceration and struggle to find sustainable, affordable housing after release, fewer than ten percent will have the opportunity to live in a halfway house or other community release center.
- **Caring for Children-** For the majority of offenders (55%) who have dependent children, reentry brings an increased responsibility for the physical, emotional, and financial wellbeing of others.

- **Other Survival Concerns-** For offenders who are released from prison without the necessary identification (e.g., birth certificate, state issued identification) and transportation options (e.g., personal vehicle, a residence near public bus routes), obtaining appropriate housing, employment, and services can be quite challenging if not impossible. (Center for Effective Public Policy, 2010).

ABOUT OUR PARTICIPANTS

Nature of offences

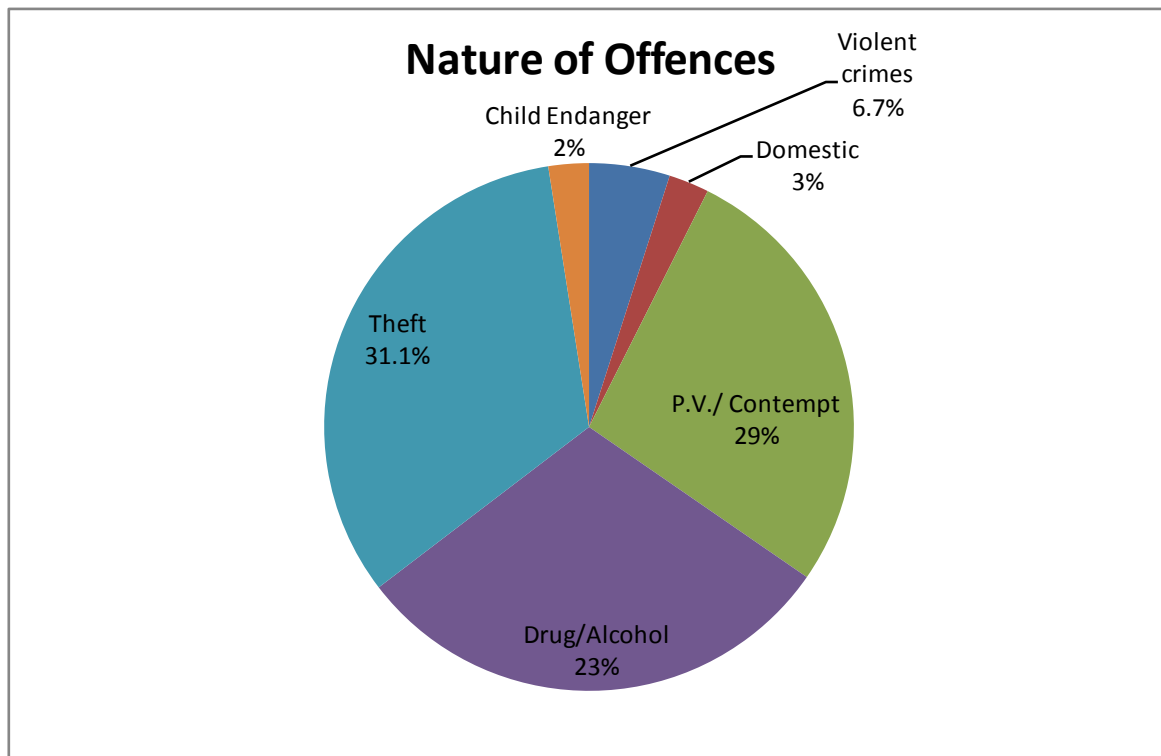
6.7% of participants had charges that are violent in nature. IE **Assault, Robbery, Murder**

1.2 % of participants had charges related to **Domestic Violence**

29.8% had charges related to **Probation Violations and Contempt of Court**

23.0 % of participants had **Drug or Alcohol** related charges

31.1% of participants had **Theft** related charges

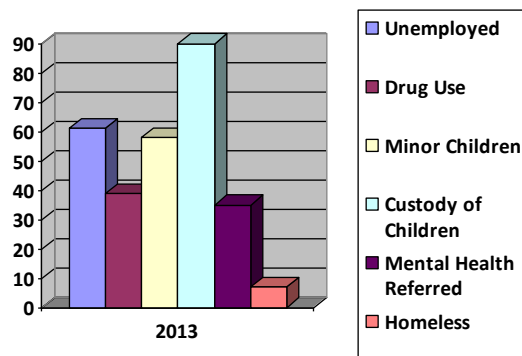


INDICATIONS:

- The female population is more likely to be the victim of domestic violence than the perpetrator of the crime.
- Female offenders are less likely to commit crimes of violence than their male counterparts. Over 93% of participants are non-violent offenders.
- Many females find it difficult to fulfill their obligations to their respective courts due to factors such as no transportation, lack of jobs or money to pay fines, drug or alcohol relapses and mental health issues.
- Theft related offenders make up the largest group in the program. This indicates that due to economic times, joblessness, substance abuse and lack of support are a large portion of issues facing the female offenders.

Social Factors of Female Population

Upon classification, the female population was given a series of questions that reflect the social factors involved with their circumstances at the time of arrest. It is interesting to note that of those who reported that they have minor children, 90% of them have custody of them. This leads to the question of who cares for them while the mother is in jail? 61% of the females were unemployed at the time of arrest and 7% were homeless. 35% reported that they have been referred to Mental Health. This gives us a valuable insight into the issues addressed by the WITTS Program.



Grant Information

The WITTS program will be applying for Grant monies this year through 2011 Justice Assistance Grant by the Office of Criminal Justice Services. For 8 years the WITTS Program has received Grant monies from the Office of the Criminal Justice Services to

aid in the assistance of supplies and to hire a part-time re-entry coordinator. WITTS unfortunately did not receive Grant monies for the year 2013.

Highlights !!!!!

Jail Groups

“Blast” Groups were new to the program this year. A blast group is one that meets for a 3-6 week period covering a variety of topics from various agencies and volunteers. The group will meet to discover, share and learn the topic over a designated time period. Topics and issues covered include Financial Literacy, Project Hope, Money Management, Anger Management, Assessing Yourself and Decision Making. Many of these groups are repeated over time to capture the interest of the inmates as the population turns over.

Creative writing is held twice a month and focuses on encouraging the women to use creativity to explore thoughtful self expression. Varieties of writing forms are used, such as, poetry, short stories, and letter writing, to promote inspired discussion

Vision boarding is a monthly workshop that encourages the women to identify and strive towards their goals. The women make a collage of words and pictures (cut out from magazines) that convey personal goals and what they value in their lives.

The self-esteem group focuses on self discovery. The curriculum conveys to the women how important it is to love oneself first so they can fully love others. The women completed various self worth exercises and learned how self image plays a role in one’s life.

Employment group received such positive feedback from the participants, it is now offered on a weekly basis. Two employment specialists from Neighboring lend their expertise as co-facilitators for the employment group. The group concentrates on getting the women to realize the skills they have to offer as an individual instead of an offender. Topics discussed include barriers to employment, the significance of attitude, interview practice, resume preparation, resources and a letter of explanation.

The yoga program is provided by a team of certified yoga instructors who take turns teaching as volunteers each Thursday. Students are provided with yoga mats and yoga blocks to use for the practice. Students are instructed in yoga postures, relaxation, meditation and breathing. The women report being very grateful for the program as it teaches them to cope with jail life by learning relaxing techniques.

“ZUMBA” teaches dance techniques for exercising to help reduce stress while incarcerated. This is a **high impact** aerobic activity.

The **“Victim’s”** Of Domestic Violence class is held on Tuesday afternoon. The session basically focuses on being a “Victim” and learning how to cope.

The **“Parenting Class”** aides in assisting women with dealing with their children from a new born to adulthood. The group focuses on setting children up for success as well as trying to become a better parent.

Catholic Charities through the **“Families of Promise”** program is designed to support families with incarcerated loved ones. The program helps the non-incarcerated parent to assume the leadership role in the family and help him or her deal with the immediate issues of housing, finances, employment, and the safety and well-being of children.

Citizens Circle

Citizen Circles are groups of community members committed to helping participants make the transition back into the community who have been involved in the local or state court systems. Citizens Circle is committed to assisting inmates benefit from an increased connection to local resources, improving their sense of belonging and self-worth, and increasing the opportunity for a successful reentry. Circle members believe in looking at the future rather than the past and focusing on acceptance and personal strengths.

Girl Scouts Beyond Bars aka Uniquely Me

Due to the reorganization and restructure of the GSNEO the “Uniquely Me” program is temporarily suspended. The program is still in need of a coordinator for the Lake County area to coordinate a troop of girls of incarcerated parents.

Aftercare

The aftercare program is temporarily suspended until funds are available for a re-entry coordinator.

Partnership

WITTS continues to build partnerships with other agencies. We reached out to Women’s Re-Entry Network (WREN) in Cleveland in 2010 to establish a connection for women returning to Cuyahoga County. Over the last several years, there has been an increase in the number of female inmates in the Lake County Jail returning to live in Cuyahoga County upon release. To improve the woman’s reintegration in their community, the two reentry programs worked together to create a referral process for out of county inmates. This collaborative effort ensures that the women will be better linked to the appropriate services.

We intend to continue to create a network of agencies and businesses designed to meet the needs of each individual. This network of professionals will assist these female offenders during incarceration by providing treatment and counseling services to help effect a positive change in their lives. Upon release these services will continue by tracking and maintaining communication and assistance with the program participants so that their continued rehabilitation and success will be better enabled to be achieved.

Contributing Networking Agencies:

Beacon Health
Extended Housing
Women's Center Lakeland Community College
Job and Family Services
Victims Assistance Program
Forbes House
Ohio State University Extension
Girl Scouts of North East Ohio
Lake Metropolitan Housing Authority
Catholic Charities Families of Promise
Citizens Circle

Sofa

The time that I wasted is my biggest regret. Spent in these places I'll never forget. Just sitting & thinking about the things that I've done, the crying, the laughing, the hurt and the fun. Now it's just me and my hard earned guilt, behind the wall of emptiness I allowed to be built. I'm trapped in my body just waiting to run back to my youth with its laughter and fun. But the chase is over there is no place to hide, Everything is gone including my pride. With reality suddenly right in my face, I'm scared, alone and stuck in this place. Memories of the past flash through my head, the pain is obvious by the tears that I shed. I ask myself "why" and "where" I went wrong. I guess I was weak when I should of been strong. Running for the drugs on the wings I have grown, My feelings were lost afraid to be shown. As I look at my past it's so easy to see, the fear that I had... afraid to be me. I would pretend to be rugged, so fast and so cool, when actually lost like a blind folded fox. I'm getting to old for this tiresome game, of acting real hard with no sense of shame. It is time that I change and get on with my life, fulfilling the dreams that I pray for each night. What my future will hold I really don't know, The years that I've wasted are starting to show. I must live each day with its new start, loving myself with all of my heart. I know I can make it as long as I try. Because I was headed for death and...
I don't want to Die.

